



Direct Motivational Intervention Can Improve Quality of Life

by Deborah Krueger

January 11, 2016

Deborah Krueger is a motivational speaker and author of the book *LET'S PLAY GRATITUDE! With Life's Sticky Issues*. Through personal experience Deborah has discovered that the 'power of positive thinking' and direct motivational intervention are both transformative and empowering. Extensive research shows that visualizing positive outcomes improves our attitude and enhances our ability to take actions that will improve our quality of life. Deborah has also found that achieving goals through 'game playing' is highly effective as a means of engagement.

Here are a few sources from which she has found the inspiration to become the 'Gratitude Messenger.'

General and Personal Benefits

Positive emotions enhance health, longevity, happiness and successⁱ

- Increased life span
- Lower rates of depression
- Lower levels of distress
- Greater resistance to the common cold
- Better psychological and physical well-being
- Reduced risk of death from cardiovascular disease
- Better coping skills during hardships and times of stress
- In a study of nuns, those that regularly expressed positive emotions lived on average 10 years longer.ⁱⁱ
- Positive people have more friends which is a key factor of happiness and longevity.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Greater inspiration, enthusiasm, motivation, energy, self-esteem/confidence, respectability, opportunistic, inner strength, solution-oriented.^{iv}

'Resiliency' is a key benefit of positive thinking^v

- Resilient people are able to face a crisis or trauma with strength and resolve.
- When dealing with a challenge, optimists typically look at what they can do to fix the problem.
- Instead of giving up hope, they marshal their resources and are willing to ask others for help.
- In the wake of a crisis, positive thoughts and emotions encourage thriving and provide a sort of buffer against depression among resilient people.
- Fortunately experts also believe that such positivism and resilience can be cultivated.
- By nurturing positive emotions, even in the face of terrible events, people can reap both short- term and long-term rewards, including managing stress levels, lessening depression, and building coping skills that will serve them well in the future.

Athletics, skill building, and development of personal resources

- Positive emotions such as gratitude and appreciation help athletes perform at a higher level.^{vi}
- Positive thoughts can actually create real value in your life and help you build skills and develop resources that last much longer than a smile.^{vii}

Clinic Staff, “Positive thinking: Stop negative self-talk to reduce stress

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/positive-thinking/art-20043950>

Positive Attitudes Improve Workplace Performance

Improved work performance:

- Higher Productivity: Positive work environments outperform negative work environments.^{viii}

Increased Sales and Improved Customer Relations

- Positive, optimistic sales people sell more than pessimistic sales people.^{ix}
- Positive employees excel in customer relations^x

Reduced Stress, Burnout and Sick-Leave

- Stress can have a seriously negative impact on your health. If you can reduce your stress, you’ll enjoy better health, less sick days, and better productivity.^{xi}
- Positive thoughts and emotions counter the negative effects of stress. For example, you can’t be thankful and stressed at the same time.^{xii}

Improved Morale, Teamwork, and Job Satisfaction

- Positive and popular workers and leaders are more likely to garner the support of others and receive pay raises and promotions and achieve greater success in the workplace.^{xiii}
- Teams are much more effective when the members are united in overcoming challenges and figuring out how they can achieve their objectives, rather than dwelling on all the problems and obstacles that stand in their way.^{xiv}

Improved Decision-Making and Problem-Solving

- Positive leaders are able to make better decisions under pressure.^{xv}

“Cognitive Behavioral Therapy” Technique to Achieve Positive Outcomes

Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) is a form of psychotherapy that treats problems and boosts happiness by modifying dysfunctional emotions, behaviors, and thoughts. CBT focuses on solutions, encouraging patients to challenge distorted cognitions and change destructive patterns of behavior.^{xvi}

- The HALO process provides the structure to achieve these results on your own, at your own pace.

Self-Paced Learning Allows Learner to Proceed at Their Own Speed

Self-paced instruction is any kind of instruction that proceeds based on learner response that does not require the immediate response of an instructor. Self-paced instruction is constructed in such a way that the learner proceeds from one topic or segment to the next at their own speed. This type of instruction is becoming increasingly popular as the education world shifts from the classroom to the internet.^{xvii}

- The HALO Process is similarly designed to allow the student to achieve these outcomes.

Emotional IQ and Emotional Vitality Can Result in Reduced Stress, Burnout, and Sick Leave

Six Seconds developed a three-part model in 1997 as a process – an action plan for using emotional intelligence in daily life.

- Emotional Intelligence is about being smarter with our feelings: more aware, more intentional, more purposeful.
- It is the capacity to blend thinking and feeling to make optimal decisions, which is key to having a successful relationship with yourself and others.
- It provides a practical and simple way to sustain your emotional vitality.^{xviii}

“Game Playing” as a Successful Learning Tool

In “How To Rewire your Brain for Positivity and Happiness,” Walter Chen wrote this:^{xix}

The unfortunate superpower of the negative is that it has three times as powerful an impact in affecting motivation than positive progress. It’s a self-proven characteristic.

What’s amazing is that we have the ability to break out of that negative feedback loop and we can actually rewire our brains to think positively. We can harness the brain’s plasticity by creating a new neural pathway and train our brain to make positive patterns more automatic. This will be the basis for a huge opportunity to change our behavior for the better.

Shawn Achor frames rewiring in his book: “The Happiness Advantage: The Seven Principles of Positive Psychology That Fuel Success and Performance at Work.”^{xx}

We can retrain the brain to scan for the good things in life—to help us see more possibility, to feel more energy, and to succeed at higher levels. The impact of practicing and retaining a more positive thinking pattern, especially on our wellbeing and happiness, can be even more powerful.

The best thing about such a practice is its long-term effects. In one study, people who did a “three good things” exercise for a week felt happier and less depressed after one month. The study then did the three-month and six-month follow-ups. Not surprisingly, the happiest participants were the ones who had continued the practice throughout.

Mark Baldwin, a social psychology professor at McGill University in Montreal, who helped develop Mind Habits (www.mindhabs.com), comments:^{xxi}

When we think of self-confidence and stress reduction, we think of deliberate thoughts. But research shows that a lot of what goes on is automatic thought. And what determines the nature of automatic thought is practice.

In other words, the old adage “Practice makes perfect” holds true for achieving mental well-being as much as it does for reaching athletic or academic goals.

Results of “Game Playing:”

“I noticed a change in attitude within the first week of playing it. It teaches your mind to automatically focus on the positive,” says Ms. Fine, who has been playing the game up to 15 minutes a day for the past six weeks. “It is deceptively simple but still has a positive effect,” offers Sherri Ekers of Evanston, Ill., who works for a credit card company.

Wendy Wood, a professor of psychology and business at the University of Southern California, lists ‘The Five Myths About Habits’ in The Washington Post.^{xxii} Here are some of the highlights:

A lack of willpower is to blame for our bad habits; when in truth, many of our behaviors are not guided by self-control.

It takes 21 days to form a new habit. There is no magic number when it comes to establishing habits. They are created as people repeat behaviors or routines in a stable context.

Learning about the benefits of new habits helps change our behavior. Research has repeatedly shown that changing knowledge and intentions does not translate into changing habits. Habits are formed through doing.

Conclusion

As the above experts agree, immeasurable benefits are derived from ‘positive thinking, developing ‘emotional IQ’ to sustain ‘emotional vitality,’ Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Self-Paced Learning, and ‘game playing.’ Direct motivational intervention achieves overall positive outcomes by inspiring people to act to improve their quality of life and their personal performance. Achieving goals through game playing makes life changes easier, more fun and is highly effective. So, let’s play the gratitude game!

ⁱ Mayo Clinic Staff, “Positive thinking: Stop negative self-talk to reduce stress,” <http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/positive-thinking/art-20043950>

ⁱⁱ Jon Gordon, source: The Nun Study, <http://www.jongordon.com/blog/11-benefits-of-being-positive-3/>

ⁱⁱⁱ Jon Gordon, source: Robert Putnam, *op. cit.*

-
- ^{iv} See: “10-benefits-of-positive-thinking,” www.beautyandtips.com/motivation/10-benefits-of-positive-thinking/; Remez Sasson, “The Power of Positive Attitude Can Change Your Life,”
- ^v See: “Benefits of Positive Thinking,” About Health, <http://www.the-benefits-of-positive-thinking.com/resilient-positive-thinking.html>
- ^{vi} Very Well Fit: “Positive Self Talk In Athletes Improves Performance,” <https://www.verywellfit.com/positive-self-talk-3120690>
- ^{vii} The Mission Podcasts: How To Add Value To Your Life,” <https://medium.com/the-mission/how-to-add-value-to-your-life-6d62930f20e9>
- ^{viii} Harvard Business Review: “Proof That Positive Work Cultures Are More Productive,” <https://hbr.org/2015/12/proof-that-positive-work-cultures-are-more-productive>
- ^{ix} Martin E.P. Seligman, “Positive, Optimistic Sales People Sell More Than Pessimistic Sales People.”
- ^x Forbes: “How Happy Employees Can Make Happy Customers,” <https://www.forbes.com/sites/shephyken/2017/05/27/how-happy-employees-make-happy-customers/#6f4cb9b05c35>
- ^{xi} Mayo Clinic: “Healthy Lifestyle Stress Management,” <https://www.forbes.com/sites/shephyken/2017/05/27/how-happy-employees-make-happy-customers/#6f4cb9b05c35>
- ^{xii} Mayo Clinic: “Positive Thinking: Stop Negative Self-Talk to Reduce Stress” <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/positive-thinking/art-20043950>
- ^{xiii} Forbes: “65% of Americans Choose a Better Boss Over a Raise.” <https://www.forbes.com/sites/tykiisel/2012/10/16/65-of-americans-choose-a-better-boss-over-a-raise-heres-why/#a320cb876d29>
- ^{xiv} Harvard Business Review: “The Secrets of Great Teamwork,” <https://hbr.org/2016/06/the-secrets-of-great-teamwork>
- ^{xv} <https://www.trainingzone.co.uk/community/blogs/sudhakarprabu/leadership-effectiveness-leading-under-pressure>
- ^{xvi} Psychology Today: Cognitive Behavioral Therapy <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/cognitive-behavioral-therapy>
- ^{xvii} Big Think: “The Value of Self-Paced Learning,” <https://bigthink.com/techweek-chicago-dispatch/the-value-of-self-paced-learning>
- ^{xviii} Six Seconds: “The Six Seconds EQ Model,” <https://www.6seconds.org/2010/01/27/the-six-seconds-eq-model/>
- ^{xix} Walter Chen, “How To Rewire Your Brain for Positivity and Happiness,” <https://blog.bufferapp.com/how-to-rewire-your-brains-for-positivity-and-happiness>
- ^{xx} Shawn Achor, “The Happiness Advantage: The Seven Principles of Positive Psychology That Fuel Success and Performance at Work,” <http://www.shawnachor.com/the-books/the-happiness-advantage/>
- ^{xxi} Mark Baldwin, “Playing mind games,” <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2008/jun/25/playing-mind-games/>
- ^{xxii} Wendy Wood, “Five myths about our habits,” The Washington Post, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/five-myths-about-our-habits/2015/12/31/1f3ab244-ad93-11e5-9ab0-884d1cc4b33e_story.html?utm_term=.40d7d4c9918a